

griffith  
History

GRIFFITH MEMOS  
September, 1961

Mrs. Matilda Beiriger, 340 N. Jay, will be 85 in October. She is one of 9 children of Mr. & Mrs. Peter Ehram, west of Dyer. They came to Griffith in 1900 to work in the tavern and restaurant where Hal Miller's Tap is now. Population was 250.

She was married in 1902, to the owner, Peter J. Beiriger. He served as president of Griffith's school board, for 37 years and died in 1939.

She continued operating the tavern until 10 years ago, when she sold it to Hal Miller. For many years, the establishment was also a hotel. In 1925, the third story burned. Known as Beiriger Hotel, it took in mostly railroad men.

Surviving brothers and sisters are: a brother, 87, in Hammond, and four sisters in Griffith: Mrs. Ed Miller, Mrs. Cash Allen, Mrs. Margaret Beiriger and Mrs. Olivia Hutchins.

\*\*\*\*\*

Griffith got its name from a contractor by the name of Griffith, who built the grade for the Grand Trunk Railroad. At that time, he lived on what is now Main Street, 1½ miles west of what is now Broad Street. That was the line between St. John Township and North Township.

We (Jamiesons) moved to Griffith in March, 1885. At that time, there was no road to get up to the Depot. A man by the name of Dayton, his wife, and sister lived in the Depot and took care of the railroad business. The nearest home, at that time, was the John Heiny farm on Main Street, and across from the pumping station. The next house east, was the Jake Helfin farm on Colfax, and the Jamieson farm was ½ mile north of it, located also on Colfax Avenue, running south of the Depot. South of Main Street was the Matt Miller farm and north of that was the Schwartz farm. Over in the Southeast corner, was the Beiriger farm. North of that, was the Troy farm. There was an old building ¼ west of the Erie Railroad crossing, which belonged to Dominick Swark.

Then, in 1891, Griffith had a building boom, and built for about two years. One of the first buildings put up was a big building about 150 ft. long on Broad Street, which was a factory for wooden ware (wooden butter bowls and chopping bowls). It started at the Bothwells Barber Shop. It never operated.

Then, the Griffith Hotel was started by a party by the name of Swalm, and Restaurant, meat market and store were built. Two large lantern factories were built. The larger was called the Raugh Factory and the smaller, the Ricketts Brass Factory.

J. Helfins was the first pioneer to build a house. An old log house was still standing and being lived in in 1940. It was built before the Civil War.

Memo by Mr. Jamieson  
(Written down for his daughter,  
Mrs. Charles Hemphill about 1942)

The following pages of advertising appear on a map of Griffith with all the area between Main Street and Elm Street, Arbogast Street and Lillian Avenue, subdivided for homesites. Also included, is a small map showing the relative location of Chicago (including the World's Fair Site of 1892) and Griffith.

These maps were distributed in 1891 by:

ELMER & JAY DWIGGINS & CO.

Founders of Griffith

Suites 408 & 409 - Chamber of Commerce Bldg.  
Chicago